Wind power is now the world's fastest growing energy source. In fact, wind power capacity in the United States increased by 87 percent in the three years from 2000 to 2003. By contrast, nuclear power is growing at a rate of less than one percent per year, while coal combustion has not grown at all since 1990. The Department of Energy has concluded that if wind turbines were erected on just six percent of the land in the contiguous United States, they could supply 150 percent (one and one-half times) as much electricity as the country now uses.

"I am proud that Montgomery County will be the first jurisdiction in the Washington metropolitan region to commit to purchasing five percent of its energy requirements from wind energy. Montgomery County is stepping up to the challenge of adopting strategies to reduce pollutant emissions, improving the quality of our air and water, and moving closer to the goal of becoming a more sustainable community."

—Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive

For local governments seeking information on buying renewable energy, conducting a competitive purchase of electricity, or forming a buying group for energy purchases, contact Montgomery County's Energy Planner at energy@askdep.com.

For more information:

Maryland Public Service Commission
800.800.4491
www.md-electric-info.com

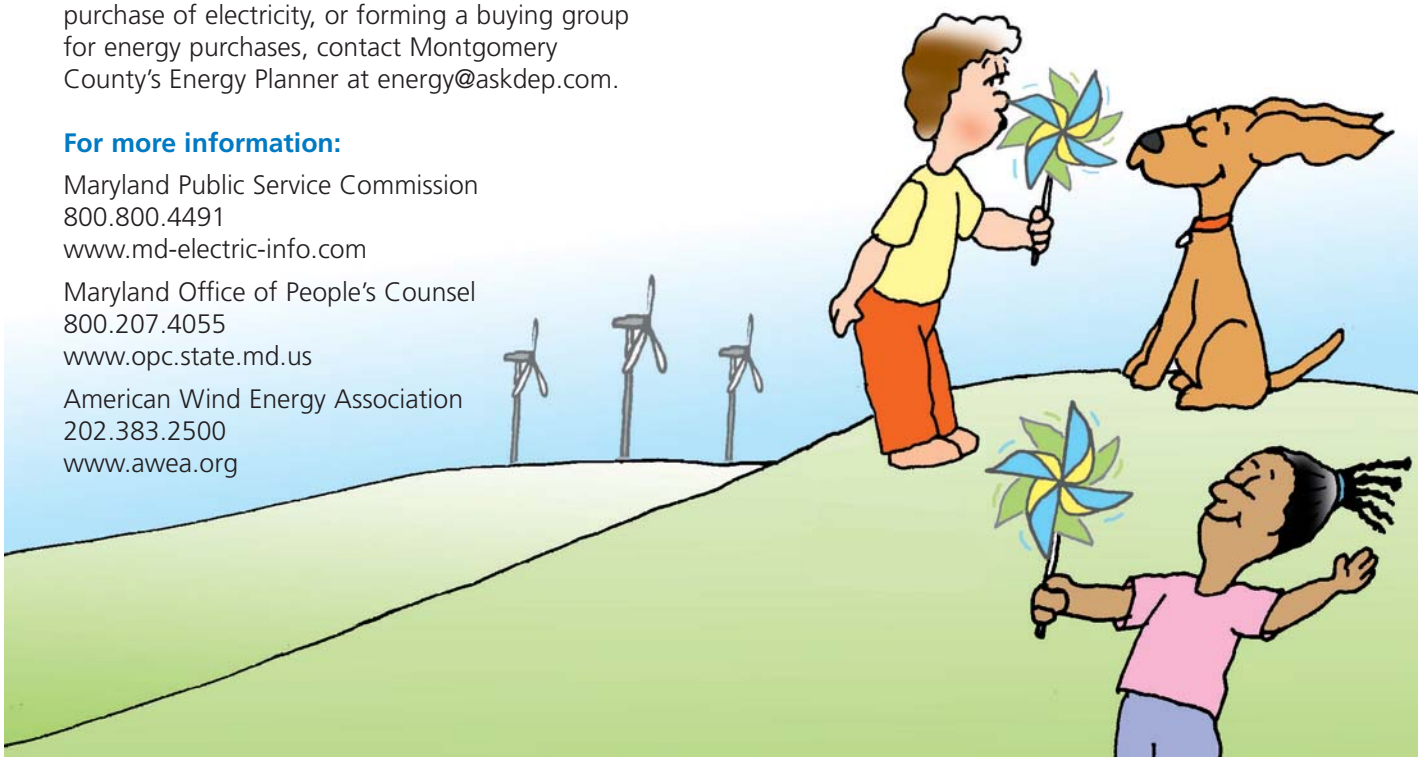
Maryland Office of People's Counsel
800.207.4055
www.opc.state.md.us

American Wind Energy Association
202.383.2500
www.awea.org

Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of
Environmental Protection

Leaders in Wind Energy

Clean, renewable wind energy is producing five percent of the electricity used by the Montgomery County Electricity Purchasing Partnership. This acquisition represents the nation's largest wind power purchase by a local government.



Montgomery County Wind Energy

Through a joint resolution, adopted in April 2003, Montgomery County agencies have been directed to include "zero-emission," renewable-energy electricity into any new electricity supply contract.

Montgomery County expects much of this power to come from nearby existing and planned wind-energy facilities in western Maryland and West Virginia. Montgomery County prepared terms of reference for a new electricity supply contract earlier this year. In spite of the marginal premium the county will pay on wind energy over conventional power purchases (less than 2 cents per kilowatt hour), the county expects to reap great environmental benefits. Chief among the environmental benefits the county is eyeing is compliance with the federal Clean Air Act.

Along with the rest of the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area, Montgomery County is classified as "severe nonattainment" for ozone. Metropolitan regions possessing levels of ozone exceeding levels specified in the federal Clean Air Act are classified as nonattainment areas and are required to develop and implement ozone reduction strategies in the form of a state implementation plan (SIP). Failure to implement an ozone reduction plan could subject the county to severe sanctions. "We could lose all our federal transportation funds in 2004," said Montgomery County Councilmember George Leventhal in a press release issued in 2003. Many available ozone reduction strategies are expensive, like purchasing fleets of zero-emission fleet vehicles, or onerous, like mandating driving restrictions. Relating distant wind turbines to local ozone may not be an intuitive connection, but the logic is sound. Buying wind energy will reduce demand on upwind coal-burning power plants—mostly in the Allegheny plateau—that contribute to the air pollution of Montgomery County. Lower demand means fewer emissions. Further, reduced present demand lessens the need for new power plants and their accompanying pollutants.

Montgomery County, however, is not the only Maryland jurisdiction that needs to implement ozone-reducing plans. "With the metropolitan Washington region designated as a severe nonattainment area under the Clean Air Act, Montgomery County is aggressively working to help the region reduce harmful pollutant emissions, and encourages other Metropolitan Council of Governments members to do the same," said Montgomery County Chief Administrative Officer Bruce Romer. With the entire region facing the same consequences for its nonattainment status, Romer's call for neighboring jurisdictions to join the county's planned wind-energy purchase, if heeded, would further diminish the region's ozone levels and move it closer to attainment. Montgomery County also hopes that, if enough jurisdictions join the wind-energy purchasing consortium, the communities will be able to take advantage of reduced bulk rates.

Citizen interest helped prompt Montgomery County's historic decision. Many residents are currently taking advantage of "green pricing" programs run by power companies serving their area. With green pricing, customers designate that a percentage of their electricity be generated by environmentally friendly sources; in Montgomery County, this usually means wind. The portion thus designated carries a slight premium, but this has not dissuaded thousands of customers in the county from taking advantage of this option. Wind energy offers many benefits and in some regions is rapidly becoming competitive in price with fossil fuel-powered electricity. Even though it is not quite evenly priced with conventionally produced electricity, the green pricing available in Montgomery County and other jurisdictions proves that customer demand warrants consideration of wind energy.

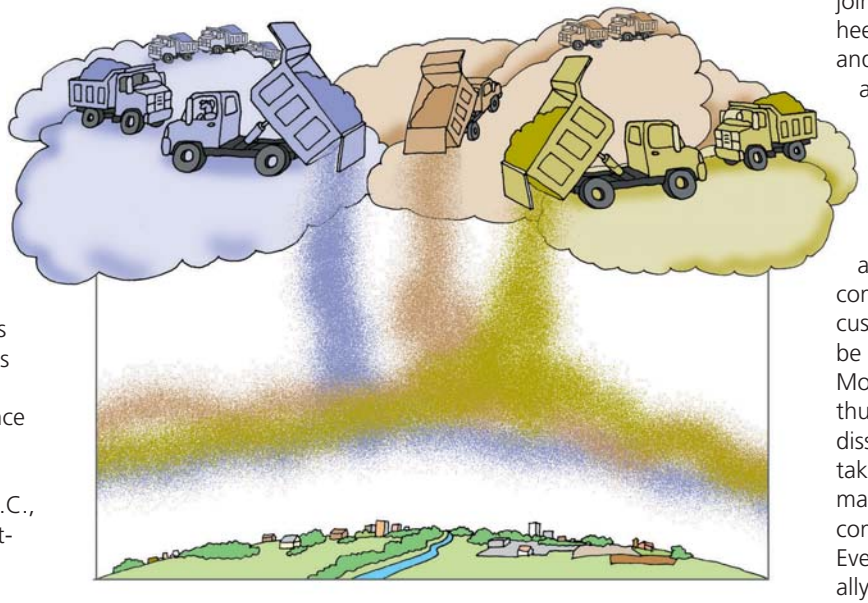
Taken from *Public Management*, May 2004
Author: Colin Haller (halleresq@aol.com).

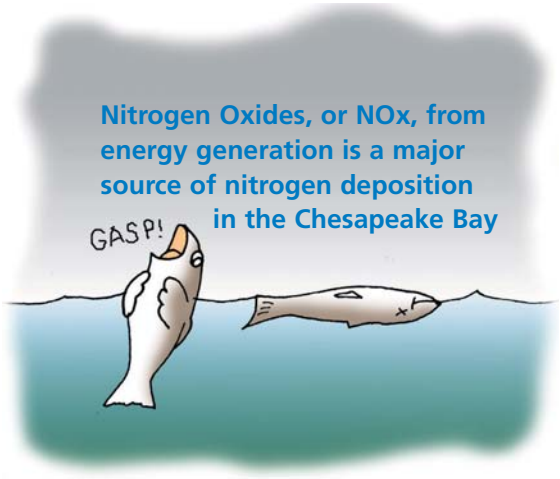
The environmental benefits from this purchase are equivalent to a YEARLY REDUCTION of...

42 million pounds of Carbon Dioxide

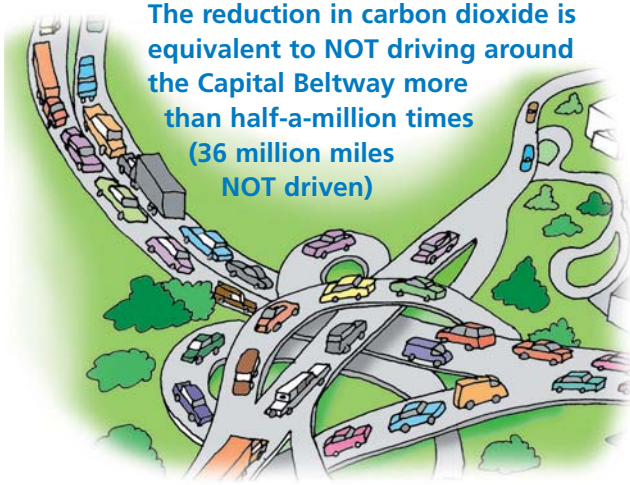
100,000 pounds of Nitrogen Oxides

Additional pollutants such as Particulate Matter, Mercury, and Sulfur Dioxide (Acid Rain)





Nitrogen Oxides, or NOx, from energy generation is a major source of nitrogen deposition in the Chesapeake Bay



The reduction in carbon dioxide is equivalent to NOT driving around the Capital Beltway more than half-a-million times (36 million miles NOT driven)